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No Communication Gaps in Neighbors Opposition to AT&T s Tower

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Neighboring property owners against AT&T's proposal to erect a 162-foot-tall cell tower at 30 Cobblers Hill Court shared their concerns during a public comment portion of Monday night's Town Council Meeting.

First Selectman Steve Vavrek told them he will participate in an internal staff meeting on the proposal this Tuesday and reminded them that a public information meeting will be held Sept. 10 at town hall.

"There hasn't even been a balloon sighting, so we don't know how it will look," Vavrek said of the height. "Everybody, don't panic. Don't listen to any misinformation."

The first selectman told the neighbors he will keep them informed on the issue and added that he shares some of the same concerns they have. He also encouraged them to share their information with him.

The Connecticut Siting Council has sole authority to approve or deny a telecommunications tower, but communities have the opportunity to provide input in the form of a municipal consultation.

Vavrek said town emergency services use Verizon, which has good coverage in Monroe. AT&T's tower is meant to eliminate coverage gaps for Sprint and other carriers.

On Monday night, Deepak Tyagi told the Town Council he has lived in town for a month and "never lost a call, had a dropped call or a missed call." He added that AT&T must prove a need for its tower and questioned whether it is actually a want.

Tyagi also criticized AT&T for referring to school security in its application when it's not needed for school security.

Dan Lichvar said he and other neighbors will provide video evidence showing the town has adequate cell phone coverage. He says the tower, which will be made to resemble a tree, would be visible year-round.

"A 162-foot-tall tower in a residential neighborhood. Will this be a precedent?" Lichvar asked.

He claims such a tower would drive his property value down by 20-percent and expressed health concerns for the nine children of families abutting the proposed property for the tower, all who are younger than 16.

"Overall, it's sending a bad message to Monroe and a bad message to all of us," Lichvar said.

Town Council Chairwoman Enid Lipeles told the neighbors that the Town Council has nothing to do with the process and encouraged them to attend the Sept. 10 informational meeting. But she also told them council members share their concerns.

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